



Relationship & Sex Education to help keep children & young people safer.

Information for Parents/Carers of Students at
The Vale Academy

In response to our changing society and the impact of the Internet, Government has now decided to introduce statutory **Relationship & Sex Education** to Secondary Schools, these lessons are not new and have been delivered in Schools since the last guidance in 2000, however some of the content has now been updated to help keep young people safer.

School is here to help; we are engaging the support of the specialist organisation BigTalk Education, who are a social enterprise recognised by national leading bodies and government. They work with 3 to 18 year olds and have been involved in delivering age appropriate education of this type for over 20 years. They also deliver training for Professionals, Parents & Carers.

Below is some information on the "Lessons 4 Life" programme that will be delivered by BigTalk Education, it reflects the recommendations of the new **Government Guidance, Ofsted & SEF** (the National Children's Bureau's Sex Education Forum)

Year 7 Introduction to Secondary RSE – The basis of knowledge of year 7 pupils can vary considerably dependent on the quality of their primary RSE provision or lack thereof. This lesson is designed to establish knowledge levels, ensure consistent accurate knowledge of core topics and back fill gaps. Themes covered include proactive safeguarding, reproduction, puberty, relationships, body image, gender and reliable sources of information

Year 8 RSE Building on The Basics. In year 8 we address core themes within RSE, myth busting common misconceptions of young people around relationships, risky behaviour, pregnancy, rights and responsibilities, as well as the law. The young people work with the team to clarify definitions of terms they have heard but may not understand, as well as answering questions in a safe confidential environment.

Year 8 Understanding Sexuality. We work with the young people to discuss changes in friendships and relationships as they may begin to develop emotional and romantic attachments. This covers all types of relationships and as with all of our programme, is fully LGBTQ+ inclusive. The workshop covers a range of themes that affect relationships and young people's perception of what constitutes a healthy relationship. We address peer pressure, abusive relationships and gender stereotypes, as well as contemporary issues such as youth generated images (sexting), internet safety and the dangers of inappropriate websites which we demonstrate can warp a young persons' view of social norms.

Year 8 Girls New Friends. This lesson suitable for years 9 through to 11 is exclusively about child sexual exploitation, the session addresses grooming in an offline setting and how this can escalate from assumed friendship to sexual exploitation. Our resources for this lesson draw comparisons of healthy and unhealthy relationships to distinguish exploitation from relationships with trust and respect*. As CSE is often reported to friends first, we discuss with the pupils what they should do if a peer makes a disclosure of abuse or exploitation to them.



Year 8 Boys Reality Check. Whether it be video games, social media, Netflix, reality TV or adult websites, young people can easily and readily access media that represent relationships, sex, body image and gender in unrealistic and often highly sexualised ways. This lesson is designed to support pupils in navigating fictional and hyperbolic representations, helping them to understand that these do not represent natural, healthy relationships. We also address how to stay safe when looking for information about sex and relationships

Year 9 Sex: Your Decisions. Building on the themes of consent and contraception from the previous lesson, this session introduces more of the choices that young people need to consider before entering a sexual relationship. Covering the most up to date contraception information with details on efficacy, is critical to help young people make informed decisions when the time comes. (We remind them the age of sexual consent is 16, but that young people these days are waiting later) To underline the consequences of decision making, we highlight the effects of unplanned parenthood on potential mothers and fathers. We highlight the limited power of fathers in decision making, the effects of pregnancy for mothers, as well as the financial and lifestyle impact for both.

Year 9 Infections and Protection. At this point we introduce the young people to the dangers of sexually transmitted infections, ensuring they understand the short and long term effects, as well as which can be treated or cured, and which can't. The lesson includes information on safer sex, a demonstration of condoms and the local information relating to how, (when the time is right for them) to access them for free. Developing a greater awareness of the law, consent, better communication skills about safer sex and confidence to make good decisions are all objectives for this workshop.

Year 9 Body Image. This lesson can be adapted for year groups from 7 right through to year 11. For both males and females outside influences can negatively impact body image, which can have repercussions on both mental and physical health as young people develop and into adulthood. By exploring how people think about their bodies, relative to media representations and social stereotypes (such as weight and gender) we relate this to self-esteem and body confidence

Year 9 Mates, Dates, Loves, Hates. This lesson is designed to aid young people identify abusive relationships and establish boundaries. Covering a wide range of abuse from verbal, emotional, financial, sexual and physical as well as isolation. By highlighting the warning signs of these we explore how young people could help their friends through these situations and where to get help, if they have concerns. To ensure the reinforcement of healthy relationships the teamwork with the group to discuss the positive qualities of their perfect partners.



Year 10 Pathways to Parenthood. Suitable for year 10 onwards this lesson focuses on the routes to parenthood that today's young people may encounter. As the average age of parents rises, so does the number of young people that may require fertility treatment later in life. This lesson also includes the path to parenthood for LGBTQ+ people, which has historically not been covered in RSE lessons. It is also within this topic that we touch on termination, statistics show that one in three women will have a termination before the age of 45, so sharing information on this subject may be of relevance to a significant number of students in the future.

Year 11 RSE: Show what you know. This is often the age at which some young people are thinking of becoming sexually active, so we review the essential material to ensure that the key topics are front of mind for the group. Covering consent, contraception, condoms and the responsibilities of young people, we once again highlight the ever present, potential risks of STIs and unplanned parenthood as well as the positives of pleasure and healthy relationships.

More information is available on BigTalk's website, www.bigtalkeducation.co.uk